



Region IV Citizen Review Panel
707 N. Armstrong Pl, Boise, ID 83704
Syringa Room
Tuesday, August 3rd, 2021
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

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Meeting Minutes

Meeting attendees:

Darcie Bobrowski, Brian McCauley, Allison Berkson, Kym Nilsen, Shannon McCarthy. Quorum met.

Nicole Noltensmeyer absent. Britney Journee absent.

Staff: Chris Freeburne (IDHW), Laura Smith, Courtney Boyce (CDH)

Guests: Darci Anderson (Family Advocates)

Call Meeting to Order

Brian McCauley, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

Motion: Brian made a motion to confirm the meeting minutes. Shannon seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

Motion: Brian amended the agenda at 5:35pm, to discuss a sibling set. Brian made a motion to approve the agenda with the amendment. Shannon seconded. None opposed. The motion carries.

The Monthly Evaluation Form was passed around. Courtney put the Google Form link into the chat at 4:32pm.

Family First with Susan Dwello

Chris reported that Susan had a change in availability and was unable to make it. That meeting could be moved to September or October at the discretion of the Panel. The IDHW is visiting with the Panel in October.

Family Advocates with Darci Anderson

Darci said she was grateful for CRP support in recommendations to the Ada County Commissioners. Darci shared that Family Advocates has been the program that gets appointed to a lot of cases. Typically they do not have enough guardians to fulfill the need to meet 0-12 year old per statute. For the first time since starting, they have been able to serve those children appointed to the program with a volunteer. That equated to 500 children which is a 9% increase. Darci shared they were impacted by COVID-19 as shown in the case counts overall.

The other thing that occurred since June is that the juvenile judges in Ada County have appointed CASA program to Rule 16 cases (i.e. expansion cases) in the juvenile court system. If they are going through their case, they recognize that there are things going on within the familial group and that should all fall under Child Protection. Darci provided an 'extreme example' including older/younger siblings where one brought upon trauma to the other. That may be a situation in which the older child does not return home and they need to look for safer environments for that child to live. Darci shared that the reason that influences our program is that this is a larger group of children with unique needs 0-18 years old where CASA program needs to revise training to include these age groups. Darci indicated this will mean increased needs in volunteers, training, and education. This is an area of growth for Family Advocates, where the funding is not there right now. They require additional funding and don't know the number of children that they could potentially be serving. This is a conversation that we need to start having with our core partners.

Darci shared that in a foster child and/or juvenile case, they would have to default to 0-12 years old but they don't want to be in that position. Darci said that in years passed when they were desperate they compared acuity to triage, but they don't want to resort to that due to lack of funding. It was discussed that Family Advocates' jurisdiction aligned with our public health district. It was asked if the courts would facilitate funding. Darci shared an Idaho Supreme Court conversation a year ago, where all CASA programs get to draw from a pool with an allocated formula, number of volunteers etc. They do not think there will be funding to meet their needs. Darci shared they have been able to interpret the statute, but in PHD7 in the growth of their program they have been able to serve all ages.

Darci discussed guardians as the counter balance to what was being discussed in the courts and needing representation. They are concerned about stretching resources, and not meeting the best interest of the child without funding. Darci presented an example where the Mother was assigned a GAL due to mental health issues. Darci referenced statute [16-1633](#) where children ages 0-12 can have a guardian, either a volunteer or staff member. If you have a parent that needs a GAL that is outside of the CASA, that would go through the public defender's office, which will then represent the adult in that case. A concern would be that those that utilize that funding source for adults, could be requesting funding traditionally used for children needing GALs. A Panel member asked who would you anticipate on applying for this funding source if it wasn't CASA? Darci shared that the 3rd Judicial District has another person that is acting as a manager of GALs and/or as a GAL. They have not sought out funding previously, but that might be an example.

Darci shared that funding is from JFAC, where there is a whole other line item that supports GALs so that has traditionally been their funding. That allocation has not changed in a significant period of time. Kym asked if Family Advocates has specific folks that coordinate things rurally. Darci answered that they have 6 GALs in Valley County.

Sen. Wintrow said that she would follow up on that, but she and Sen. Lee are not on JFAC. Sen. Wintrow discussed sending a text out regarding the interpretation of the law that Darci Anderson was referencing.

Darcie Bobrowski said that Senator Wintrow and I talked about this yesterday. There must be funding provided to follow the law as it is written and a child is supposed to have a guardian. Darcie Bobrowski said we shouldn't be getting tax relief when children are not being served as per the LAW!

Darci Anderson also discussed the need for funding pro bono lawyers.

It was also asked if case load is counted by family and/or individual child, in CASA it is cases not individual cases. So it might be two cases but with 10+ children involved. Additional funding would support recruitment of volunteers, training is \$3,000 roughly for each volunteer. Out of the funding that was mentioned, Region IV was allocated \$200,000 out of the available funds. The algorithm is contributed to by CASA and IDHW data points. Guardians can accomplish more for outcomes than the Panel and are a wonderful asset to the case progression. The GALs pull everything. Darci discussed partnering with the University of Idaho of Law where L2 (Year Two Law students) can go through Family Advocates training to become GALs. When we were awarded funds through the Idaho Council they received trajectory that indicated a decline in funding. They were informed that they would need to find alternative funding sources as their foreseeable future funding 3-5 years out will no longer be sustainable.

Sen. Wintrow communicated about ARPA funds, and sent emails to different folks regarding that process. There is a certain amount we can get by with, but below that would be difficult. This will have to go through the legislation and appropriations committee. What Darci is addressing that if BOCA goes away and the federal money is gone, what amount of money goes to domestic violence and child abuse programs. Senator Wintrow is looking for long term sustainable funding, as we don't have a pool in a state level funding. The level of funding does not equate to the number of children, however they are receiving less funding.

Darci provided the [2020 GAL Legislative Report](#) and referenced page 4 of the document and referenced page 7 for statistics.

Sen. Wintrow said that she sent an email to look into this further. The allocation was reviewed in 2018, although Darcie is not sure of the whole process as this was before her time. Sen. Wintrow identified that it is fair to review these items. Darcie indicated that they presented at JFAC. Brian said that he would be interested in knowing the value of child served versus the funds distributed, which could justify moving forward with this item.

2020 National Citizens' Review Panel Conference

Nicole is absent. Shannon indicated waiting until Nicole is available to discuss the conference as well and is happy to postpone the agenda item.

Membership Update

Courtney discussed the advantages of utilizing historical knowledge from Darcie as vice president

Motion: At 5:18pm, Brian made a motion to move the agenda until next month, Shannon seconded. None opposed, the motion carries.

Sibling Set (*Amendment to Agenda*)

Concerns regarding a case were shared with Brian by Region IV foster parent. Brian requested records. This request denied from the Department as it is a Region III case. Brian indicated conversations with the Department regarding this case review request and the interpretation of statute. Brian asked what do we know about IDAPA and/or [IDHW policies](#) regarding sibling sets? Brian indicated that Region III Citizen Review Panel member Cindy Floyd reviewed the case. Brian shared the need to understand how sibling sets are removed individually, including termination for parental rights, and visitation for biological parents and siblings. Brian asked how does IFYAB law passing influence IDHW policies and procedures? In 2018, IFYAB advocated for [SB 1341](#) to strengthen the policy of the Idaho Child Protection Act with an emphasis on placing siblings together and supporting sibling visitation.

This resource may also be of service: [State of Idaho Judicial Branch Child Protection Manual](#)

The themes that were addressed include establishing paternity, working permanency plan before 15 month mark, sibling placement and visitation issues. Allison noted that there is not a lot of direction regarding establishing paternity, which is a systemic issue where there have been updates in guidelines.

The question was also asked, how long does a person have to be incarcerated before that is considered abandonment? Other themes present in this case include the statute not being followed regarding permanency. It was identified that outside of legislative influence and CRP there was not accountability over DHW to follow statute. It was addressed that sibling placement is only influenced by siblings in care. There is no legal requirement in a closed case, or if child enters back into care. The Panel discussed visitation with siblings, and transitioning to minimize disruptions to a child. Brian, Chris, Sen. Wintrow, and Darcie spoke. Brian said that they will work towards collaboration across the CRP Panels. If it is about confidentiality regarding regional specific cases, then we are still within those concerns. Brian stated that this case identifies systematic case issues regarding permanency plan, parental rights, etc. Allison discussed case mapping. Chris Freeburne said that the data point Allison was referencing could be discussed with the DHW leadership call, as case mapping, sibling visitation, and incarceration pertain to permanency plans.

The Panel did not go into Executive Session for Case Reviews.

Panel Updates

The Panel briefly discussed potential items for discussion at next month's meeting, including the postponed agenda item from today.

Adjourn

Brian McCauley adjourned the Region IV Citizen Review Panel Meeting at 6:05pm.